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Press Release

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During the 2007 legislative session, the Utah State Legislature passed Senate Bill 30, creating the ability of cities to break away from large districts to form their own city school districts. While the idea may be very reasonable, the elected officials of Murray City believe the law generates too many unanswered questions, as well as too many unintended consequences. Murray City believes that the measure should not be allowed to go on the ballot until these questions are answered and the consequences are mitigated.

On April 26, 2007, Murray City received copies of the Wikstrom study of the feasibility of the creation of a new, smaller school district in the eastern-most portion of Granite School District. Murray City was notified of the study and asked to respond (within 90 days) as to whether or not the City would participate in the Interlocal Participation Agreement.

In order to comply with this request, Murray scheduled three Neighborhood Council Meetings and a Public Hearing to inform the residents as to the two choices offered, and to ask their opinions on whether or not the City should participate in the interlocal agreement.

At that time, Murray had two options from which to choose. Option one was to participate in the Interlocal Agreement. This meant Murray's eastern-most citizens would be allowed to vote (with other select areas) as to whether the Smaller School District would break away from Granite School District. The possible outcomes of that choice would be: (1) if the measure passes in the November election, they would become part of the new school district, and (2) if the measure fails, they would remain status quo.

Option two would result in rejecting the offer to participate in the Interlocal Agreement. The possible outcomes for that position are: (1) having that area included in the Murray City School District if the measure passes, and (2) to remain status quo if the measure fails. While this option does not allow residents to vote, more than 90% of those in attendance at the Council meetings chose overwhelmingly to ask the City not to participate...even at the risk of being denied the right to vote on the issue. Many residents expressed their desire to either remain status quo or become a part of the Murray City School District. As option two was the only choice that allowed that outcome, the City Council complied.

In accordance with State statute, Murray City followed the rules and made a decision in a

timely manner. From the time the notification was received on April 26th through the 90 days allowed, Murray City had to make a decision by July 26th. However, by that time only two entities, Murray City and South Salt Lake, had made a decision.

On Thursday, August 2nd, the Holladay City Council chose to change the boundaries of the proposed new district. While Holladay attempted to solve the issue of preserving Cottonwood High School, this action does not leave the high school's population as status quo. The students living in South Salt Lake and Holladay who have traditionally attended Cottonwood High School would not be included, further reducing the number of students attending that school.

Further, Holladay's action makes it impossible for east Murray residents to ever become part of the Murray City School District. While the intent of the law was to enable cities to create school district boundaries contiguous with their city boundaries, this proposal would assure that Murray City would never be given that opportunity.

Finally, the most egregious consequence of this law is the fact that many affected citizens would be disenfranchised. While the original proposal disallowed any representation of the residents of Taylorsville (whose students would be left in limbo for lack of a school), this new Holladay proposal disenfranchises an additional group of students (residing in the western half of unincorporated Salt Lake County's Millcreek Township) who now have been cut out of the proposal. We can only assume that Holladay believes that this will allow Cottonwood High School to remain viable. However, as the statute requires a feasibility study of the proposed geographic area, we believe that this change of boundaries forces the newly proposed area to undergo another feasibility study.

The elected officials of Murray City stand by their decision to have our residents remain either in the current district situation, or to allow them to be incorporated into existing Murray City School District. While other cities are looking to provide contiguous City and School District boundaries for their residents, Murray City should not be excluded from that opportunity. We implore the Utah State Legislature to reassemble or take an additional year to rethink this issue. We believe that through thoughtful consideration, a reasonable and non-discriminatory measure will be generated.